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10/521,156	10/04/2005	Tasuku Amemiya	Q85728	9035
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SUGHRUE MION, PLLC 2100 PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE, N.W. SUITE 800 WASHINGTON, DC 20037			KIM, KEVIN Y	
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Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)
	10/521,156	AMEMIYA ET AL.
	Examiner Kevin Y. Kim	Art Unit 3714

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 17 November 2006.
 2a) This action is FINAL. 2b) This action is non-final.
 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 1-12 is/are pending in the application.
 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
 5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
 6) Claim(s) 1-12 is/are rejected.
 7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
 8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
 10) The drawing(s) filed on 13 January 2005 is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
 Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 a) All b) Some * c) None of:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
 2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
 3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
 Paper No(s)/Mail Date 1/13/05, 11/17/06.

4) Interview Summary (PTO-413)
 Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
 5) Notice of Informal Patent Application
 6) Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Objections

1. Claims 5-7 are objected to under 37 CFR 1.75(c) as being in improper form because a multiple dependent claim cannot depend from any other multiple dependent claim. See MPEP § 608.01(n). Accordingly, the claims have not been further treated on the merits.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

2. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

3. Claims 1 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. Applicant claims a "first service" and "second service," but it is not clear as to what those services are meant to be. Applicant will regard them as a generic service that provides some kind of utility to the user.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

4. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the

applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

5. Claims 1 and 2 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Postrel (US 6,594,640 B1).
6. In re claim 1, Postrel discloses a network service system for providing a user with first and second services, comprising:
 - a first server (figure 4, 20) for providing the first service (column 6, lines 5-11);
 - a first database (figure 4, 54) connected to the first server for storing point information in association with user identifying information related to the user in the first server (column 7, lines 14-19 and figure 5, 54, "user accounts," "user preferences," etc.). As disclosed, database 54 stores the user's reward exchange account, and transfer of points into said account is possible (column 7, lines 21-23).
 - a second server (figure 4, 10, 12, or 14) for providing the second service (column 5, lines 39-43); and
 - a second database connected to the second server (figure 4, 52 and column 6, lines 17-20) for storing point information in association with user identifying information related to the user in the second service (column 5, lines 39-43); wherein
 - the first server includes point offering means for updating the point information stored in the first database in association with the user identifying information related to the user so as to offer points to the user (column 6, lines 47-50). This limitation meets the three-prong test per MPEP 2181 and thereby invokes 35 U.S.C. 112 6th paragraph.

(page 18, lines 19-25) as it performs the same function in substantially the same way and produces substantially the same result as the corresponding element in applicant's specification. See MPEP 2183.

the second server includes point consuming means for updating the point information stored in the second database in association with the user identifying information related to the user so as to consume the point of the user when the second service is provided to the user (column 6, lines 35-37). This limitation meets the three-prong test per MPEP 2181 and thereby invokes 35 U.S.C. 112 6th paragraph. The point offering means of Postrel are considered an equivalent to applicant's means (page 18, lines 19-25) as it performs the same function in substantially the same way and produces substantially the same result as the corresponding element in applicant's specification. See MPEP 2183.

the network service system further comprises point transferring means for updating the point information stored in the second database in association with the user identifying information related to the user in the second server based on the point information stored in the first database in association with the user identifying information related to the user in the first server (column 6, lines 20-37). This limitation meets the three-prong test per MPEP 2181 and thereby invokes 35 U.S.C. 112 6th paragraph. The point transferring means of Postrel are considered an equivalent to applicant's means (page 15, line 18 to page 16, line 8) as it performs the same function in substantially the same way and produces substantially the same result as the corresponding element in applicant's specification. See MPEP 2183.

7. In re claim 2, Postrel discloses a service to allow a user to play a game (column 11, lines 41-44).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

8. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negatived by the manner in which the invention was made.

9. Claims 3 and 4 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Postrel in view of Freishtat et al (US 6,567,850 B1) hereafter Freishtat.

10. In re claim 3, Postrel has been discussed above, but does not disclose a charge amount calculating means for calculating an amount of money to be paid from a person involved in the first server to a person involved in the second server. This limitation meets the three-prong test per MPEP 2181 and thereby invokes 35 U.S.C. 112 6th paragraph.

Freishtat teaches a transaction model in which charges are calculated per transaction, the fees being directed towards the administrator providing the service to the end user (column 14, lines 21-33). The per transaction of Freishtat is considered an equivalent to applicant's means (page 19, line 20 to page 20, line 6) as it performs the same function in substantially the same way and produces substantially the same result as the corresponding element in applicant's specification. See MPEP 2183. It would have been obvious to one skilled in the art at the time the invention was made to

combine the elements of Freishtat with Postrel in order to both generate revenue and to cover bandwidth costs, and further to fully compensate the administrator for services provided.

11. In re claim 4, Postrel has been discussed above, but does not disclose a means for counting the number of users, and calculating the amount to charge based on the number of users. This limitation meets the three-prong test per MPEP 2181 and thereby invokes 35 U.S.C. 112 6th paragraph.

Freishtat teaches a transaction model which allows for the calculation of per user fees (column 14, lines 21-33), further disclosing it as a way to debit an account based on the number of users (claim 10 of the reference). The per user transaction of Freishtat is considered an equivalent to applicant's means (page 19, line 20 to page 20, line 6) as it performs the same function in substantially the same way and produces substantially the same result as the corresponding element in applicant's specification. See MPEP 2183. It would have been obvious to one skilled in the art at the time the invention was made to combine the per user transactions of Freishtat with Postrel for the predictable result of generating revenue and to cover bandwidth costs, and further to fully compensate the administrator for services provided.

12. Claims 8-12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Postrel in view of Atalla (US 4,268,715).

13. In re claim 8, Postrel discloses a point transfer system including first and second databases (figure 4, 54 and 52), each storing point information, comprising:

point information updating means for updating the point information stored in the first database (column 6, lines 47-50). This limitation meets the three-prong test per MPEP 2181 and thereby invokes 35 U.S.C. 112 6th paragraph. The point offering means of Postrel are considered an equivalent to applicant's means (page 18, lines 19-25) as it performs the same function in substantially the same way and produces substantially the same result as the corresponding element in applicant's specification. See MPEP 2183.

point inquiry request receiving means for receiving a point inquiry request (column 6, lines 7-11 and column 11, line 66 to column 12, line 1). This limitation meets the three-prong test per MPEP 2181 and thereby invokes 35 U.S.C. 112 6th paragraph. In order for the account information to be obtained, the user logs in and requests said information through the web browser and by entering the appropriate information. The point inquiry means of Postrel are considered an equivalent to applicant's means (page 19, lines 2-7) as it performs the same function in substantially the same way and produces substantially the same result as the corresponding element in applicant's specification. See MPEP 2183.

point transferring request receiving means for receiving a point transfer request (column 6, lines 20-37). This limitation meets the three-prong test per MPEP 2181 and thereby invokes 35 U.S.C. 112 6th paragraph. The point transferring means of Postrel are considered an equivalent to applicant's means (page 15, line 18 to page 16, line 8) as it performs the same function in substantially the same way and produces substantially the same result as the corresponding element in applicant's specification.

See MPEP 2183.

point information returning means for returning the point information stored in the first database when the point inquiry request is received by the point inquiry request receiving means (column 6, lines 25-30). This limitation meets the three-prong test per MPEP 2181 and thereby invokes 35 U.S.C. 112 6th paragraph. The point information returning means of Postrel are considered an equivalent to applicant's means (page 15, line 18 to page 16, line 8) as it performs the same function in substantially the same way and produces substantially the same result as the corresponding element in applicant's specification. See MPEP 2183.

However, Postrel does not disclose:

secret identification information updating means for updating secret identification information stored in the first database in association with the point information when the point information stored in the first database is updated by the point information updating means;

secret identification information returning means;

the point transfer request receiving means including secret identification information;

first point transferring means for updating the point information stored in the first database to decrease a point balance and returning point transfer allowance data when the secret identification information included in the point transfer request received by the point transfer request receiving means matches the secret identification information stored in the first database; and

second point transferring means for updating the point information stored in the second database to increase a point balance when the point transfer allowance data is returned by the first point transferring means. All of the previous limitations meet the three-prong test per MPEP 2181 and thereby invokes 35 U.S.C. 112 6th paragraph.

Atalla teaches:

secret identification information updating means (column 3, lines 45-48). The means of Atalla is considered an equivalent to applicant's means (page 21, line 24 to page 22, line 11), as it performs the same function in substantially the same way and produces substantially the same result as the corresponding element in applicant's specification. See MPEP 2183.

a transaction that occurs only when the secret information (the ID) from one file matches the secret information from the other (column 3, line 54 to column 4, line 7). The verification method of Atalla is considered an equivalent to applicant's means (page 21, line 24 to page 22, line 11) as it performs the same function in substantially the same way and produces substantially the same result as the corresponding element in applicant's specification. See MPEP 2183.

providing the secret identification information when requested (column 3, line 54 to column 4, line 7), thus returning the information.

It would have been obvious to one skilled in the art at the time the invention was made to combine the first and second point transferring means with the method of Atalla for the predictable improvement of improving security of data transmissions between

stations by making it unnecessary to transmit user-identification information between the stations.

14. In re claim 9, Atalla teaches the secret identification information updating the information based on a random number (column 3, line 45 to column 4, line 7).

15. In re claim 10, Postrel discloses a point management device, comprising:
point information updating means for updating the point information stored in a database (column 6, lines 47-50). This limitation meets the three-prong test per MPEP 2181 and thereby invokes 35 U.S.C. 112 6th paragraph. The point offering means of Postrel are considered an equivalent to applicant's means (page 18, lines 19-25) as it performs the same function in substantially the same way and produces substantially the same result as the corresponding element in applicant's specification. See MPEP 2183.

point inquiry request receiving means for receiving a point inquiry request (column 6, lines 7-11 and column 11, line 66 to column 12, line 1). This limitation meets the three-prong test per MPEP 2181 and thereby invokes 35 U.S.C. 112 6th paragraph. In order for the account information to be obtained, the user logs in and requests said information through the web browser and by entering the appropriate information. The point inquiry means of Postrel are considered an equivalent to applicant's means (page 19, lines 2-7) as it performs the same function in substantially the same way and produces substantially the same result as the corresponding element in applicant's specification. See MPEP 2183.

point information returning means for returning the point information stored in the first database when the point inquiry request is received by the point inquiry request receiving means (column 6, lines 25-30). This limitation meets the three-prong test per MPEP 2181 and thereby invokes 35 U.S.C. 112 6th paragraph. The point information returning means of Postrel are considered an equivalent to applicant's means (page 15, line 18 to page 16, line 8) as it performs the same function in substantially the same way and produces substantially the same result as the corresponding element in applicant's specification. See MPEP 2183.

However, Postrel does not disclose:

secret identification information updating means for updating secret identification information stored in the first database in association with the point information when the point information stored in the first database is updated by the point information updating means;

secret identification information returning means;

the point transfer request receiving means including secret identification information;

first point transferring means for updating the point information stored in the first database to decrease a point balance and returning point transfer allowance data when the secret identification information included in the point transfer request received by the point transfer request receiving means matches the secret identification information stored in the first database; and

second point transferring means for updating the point information stored in the

second database to increase a point balance when the point transfer allowance data is returned by the first point transferring means. All of the previous limitations meet the three-prong test per MPEP 2181 and thereby invokes 35 U.S.C. 112 6th paragraph.

Atalla teaches:

secret identification information updating means (column 3, lines 45-48). The means of Atalla is considered an equivalent to applicant's means (page 21, line 24 to page 22, line 11), as it performs the same function in substantially the same way and produces substantially the same result as the corresponding element in applicant's specification. See MPEP 2183.

a transaction that occurs only when the secret information (the ID) from one file matches the secret information from the other (column 3, line 54 to column 4, line 7). The verification method of Atalla is considered an equivalent to applicant's means (page 21, line 24 to page 22, line 11) as it performs the same function in substantially the same way and produces substantially the same result as the corresponding element in applicant's specification. See MPEP 2183.

providing the secret identification information when requested (column 3, line 54 to column 4, line 7), thus returning the information.

It would have been obvious to one skilled in the art at the time the invention was made to combine the first and second point transferring means with the method of Atalla for the predictable improvement of improving security of data transmissions between stations by making it unnecessary to transmit user-identification information between the stations.

16. In re claim 11, Postrel discloses a point management method, comprising:
point information updating step for updating the point information stored in a
database (column 6, lines 47-50). This limitation meets the three-prong test per MPEP
2181 and thereby invokes 35 U.S.C. 112 6th paragraph. The point offering means of
Postrel are considered an equivalent to applicant's means (page 18, lines 19-25) as it
performs the same function in substantially the same way and produces substantially
the same result as the corresponding element in applicant's specification. See MPEP
2183.

point inquiry request receiving step for receiving a point inquiry request (column
6, lines 7-11 and column 11, line 66 to column 12, line 1). This limitation meets the
three-prong test per MPEP 2181 and thereby invokes 35 U.S.C. 112 6th paragraph. In
order for the account information to be obtained, the user logs in and requests said
information through the web browser and by entering the appropriate information. The
point inquiry means of Postrel are considered an equivalent to applicant's means (page
19, lines 2-7) as it performs the same function in substantially the same way and
produces substantially the same result as the corresponding element in applicant's
specification. See MPEP 2183.

point information returning step for returning the point information stored in the
first database when the point inquiry request is received by the point inquiry request
receiving means (column 6, lines 25-30). This limitation meets the three-prong test per
MPEP 2181 and thereby invokes 35 U.S.C. 112 6th paragraph. The point information
returning means of Postrel are considered an equivalent to applicant's means (page 15,

line 18 to page 16, line 8) as it performs the same function in substantially the same way and produces substantially the same result as the corresponding element in applicant's specification. See MPEP 2183.

However, Postrel does not disclose:

secret identification information updating step for updating secret identification information stored in the first database in association with the point information when the point information stored in the first database is updated by the point information updating means;

secret identification information returning step;

the point transfer request receiving step including secret identification information;

first point transferring step for updating the point information stored in the first database to decrease a point balance and returning point transfer allowance data when the secret identification information included in the point transfer request received by the point transfer request receiving step matches the secret identification information stored in the first database; and

second point transferring step for updating the point information stored in the second database to increase a point balance when the point transfer allowance data is returned by the first point transferring step. All of the previous limitations meet the three-prong test per MPEP 2181 and thereby invokes 35 U.S.C. 112 6th paragraph.

Atalla teaches:

secret identification information updating step (column 3, lines 45-48). The

means of Atalla is considered an equivalent to applicant's means (page 21, line 24 to page 22, line 11), as it performs the same function in substantially the same way and produces substantially the same result as the corresponding element in applicant's specification. See MPEP 2183.

a transaction that occurs only when the secret information (the ID) from one file matches the secret information from the other (column 3, line 54 to column 4, line 7). The verification method of Atalla is considered an equivalent to applicant's means (page 21, line 24 to page 22, line 11) as it performs the same function in substantially the same way and produces substantially the same result as the corresponding element in applicant's specification. See MPEP 2183.

providing the secret identification information when requested (column 3, line 54 to column 4, line 7), thus returning the information.

It would have been obvious to one skilled in the art at the time the invention was made to combine the first and second point transferring means with the method of Atalla for the predictable improvement of improving security of data transmissions between stations by making it unnecessary to transmit user-identification information between the stations.

17. In re claim 12, Postrel discloses a network game system, comprising:
a first game (column 11, lines 41-44) server (figure 4, 20);
a first database (figure 4, 54) connected to the first server for storing point information in association with user identifying information related to the user in the first server (column 7, lines 14-19 and figure 5, 54, "user accounts," "user preferences,"

etc.). As disclosed, database 54 stores the user's reward exchange account, and transfer of points into said account is possible (column 7, lines 21-23).

a second game (column 11, lines 41-44) server (figure 4, 10, 12, or 14); and a second database connected to the second server (figure 4, 52 and column 6, lines 17-20) for storing point information in association with user identifying information related to the user in the second service (column 5, lines 39-43); wherein

the first game server includes

point information updating means for updating the point information stored in the first database (column 6, lines 47-50). This limitation meets the three-prong test per MPEP 2181 and thereby invokes 35 U.S.C. 112 6th paragraph. The point information updating means of Postrel are considered an equivalent to applicant's means (page 18, lines 19-25) as it performs the same function in substantially the same way and produces substantially the same result as the corresponding element in applicant's specification. See MPEP 2183.

point information returning means for returning the point information stored in the first database when the point inquiry request is received by the point inquiry request receiving means (column 6, lines 25-30). This limitation meets the three-prong test per MPEP 2181 and thereby invokes 35 U.S.C. 112 6th paragraph. The point information returning means of Postrel are considered an equivalent to applicant's means (page 15, line 18 to page 16, line 8) as it performs the same function in substantially the same way and produces substantially the same result as the corresponding element in applicant's specification. See MPEP 2183.

point inquiry request receiving means for receiving a point inquiry request (column 6, lines 7-11 and column 11, line 66 to column 12, line 1). This limitation meets the three-prong test per MPEP 2181 and thereby invokes 35 U.S.C. 112 6th paragraph. In order for the account information to be obtained, the user logs in and requests said information through the web browser and by entering the appropriate information. The point inquiry means of Postrel are considered an equivalent to applicant's means (page 19, lines 2-7) as it performs the same function in substantially the same way and produces substantially the same result as the corresponding element in applicant's specification. See MPEP 2183.

However, Postrel does not disclose:

secret identification information updating means for updating secret identification information stored in the first database in association with the point information when the point information stored in the first database is updated by the point information updating means;

secret identification information returning means;

the point transfer request receiving means including secret identification information;

first point transferring means for updating the point information stored in the first database to decrease a point balance and returning point transfer allowance data when the secret identification information included in the point transfer request received by the point transfer request receiving means matches the secret identification information stored in the first database; and

the second game server including

second point transferring means for updating the point information stored in the second database to increase a point balance when the point transfer allowance data is returned by the first point transferring means. All of the previous limitations meet the three-prong test per MPEP 2181 and thereby invokes 35 U.S.C. 112 6th paragraph.

Atalla teaches:

secret identification information updating means (column 3, lines 45-48). The means of Atalla is considered an equivalent to applicant's means (page 21, line 24 to page 22, line 11), as it performs the same function in substantially the same way and produces substantially the same result as the corresponding element in applicant's specification. See MPEP 2183.

a transaction that occurs only when the secret information (the ID) from one file matches the secret information from the other (column 3, line 54 to column 4, line 7). The verification method of Atalla is considered an equivalent to applicant's means (page 21, line 24 to page 22, line 11) as it performs the same function in substantially the same way and produces substantially the same result as the corresponding element in applicant's specification. See MPEP 2183.

providing the secret identification information when requested (column 3, line 54 to column 4, line 7), thus returning the information.

It would have been obvious to one skilled in the art at the time the invention was made to combine the first and second point transferring means with the method of Atalla for the predictable improvement of improving security of data transmissions between

stations by making it unnecessary to transmit user-identification information between the stations.

Conclusion

18. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. Acres (US 6,607,441 B1) discloses a method for transferring credit from one gaming machine to another. Darago et al (US 6,170,014 B1) discloses a computer architecture for managing courseware in a shared use operating environment. Sakakibara (JP 09330298 A) discloses a password registering method, verifying method, password updating method, password registering system, verifying system and password updating system. Weiss (US 6,511,377 B1) discloses a cashless gaming system: apparatus and method. Acres (US 6,319,125 B1) discloses a method apparatus for promoting play on a network of gaming devices.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Kevin Y. Kim whose telephone number is 571-270-3215. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Thursday, alternating Fridays.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Xuan Thai can be reached on 571-272-7147. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

KK
9/27/07



XUAN M. THAI
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER